

Sow and Tell

February, 2025
Volume 64, Issue 5

A Publication of The Five Hills Garden Club
Member of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region, District III

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P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

January is often the coldest month in many parts of the country, and our area is no exception. Elizabeth's newsletter article last month on the benefits of snow was timely. Because of the cold and snowy weather, we held our general meeting on Zoom. It was wonderful to see members who would not have been able to attend otherwise.

This time of year, we can look forward to the very early signs of spring, with many flowering bulbs and plants beginning to show off—snowdrops, crocuses, winter aconite, daffodils, and Virginia springbeauty are a few.

As the February days grow longer and the temperatures warm, you may be tempted to clean up those garden beds. However, please wait until the temperature is consistently above 50 degrees to protect pollinators who are overwintering.

I'm excited to hear Lindsey Walker, our speaker from the National Wildlife Federation this month, speak on gardening to sustain wildlife, land, and water and restore the natural environment.

District III's nominating committee is seeking people to serve on the new 2025-2027 Board. If you are interested in serving, please let me know.

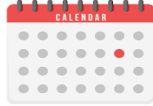
I encourage you to participate in our Horticulture display this month by bringing in a piece of found wood and/or a design incorporating one piece of found wood.

Finally, please join me in welcoming Lisa Rzepka to the Five Hills Garden Club Board. Lisa will be our new Civic Chair, organizing and overseeing the garden at Glyndon Park. Noreen will continue taking care of the Blue Star Memorial and Kathy Nebhut the wreath workshop.

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Happy Gardening and Happy Valentine's Day! Joy



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 11	Board Meeting - ZOOM
Feb 18	General Meeting
Mar 11	Board Meeting
Mar 18	General Meeting
Mar 27	District III Meeting

NOTE: All general meetings at Vienna Presbyterian Church will be held in the Fellowship Hall on the first floor.

FEBRUARY 18, 2025 PROGRAM GARDENING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Lindsey Walker, Senior Manager, Education & Community Conservation, Mid-Atlantic Regional Center will speak on the National Wildlife Federation's work in encouraging residents to garden to sustain wildlife, land, and water to help restore the natural environment. Alongside its grassroots efforts to advocate for clean air, clean water, and ecosystem protection, the NWF works to create new habitat and restore damaged areas through its wildlife gardening and tree planting programs.

Val Plisko



Credit: Tammi Elbert, National Wildlife Federation website

HORTICULTURE



Horticulture: Collect pieces of *found* wood that can be used in floral design.

Design: Make a design incorporating one piece of *found* wood.

Jane Schmiedekamp

WAYS AND MEANS

Think Spring (Yard sale)

Only about 100 days left until our yard sale on Saturday, **May 17!** While that sounds like a long time, we all know how time flies. Thank you to those of you who have already brought treasures to Roberta's for storage. She's willing to accept anything that's in good condition and can be easily moved.



Lots of willing workers will be needed to make this a success. The plan is to have the usual yard sale "stuff" along with plants and baked goods. We'll need people to be in charge of each of these areas. Please be thinking about how you'd like to help. A Sign Up Genius will be coming your way in March and we hope everyone will find a job or two that suits them. In the meantime, may the warm winds melt the snow and ice and put you in the mood for being outside in your garden.

Roberta Lewis and Carolyn Staska

GARDEN THERAPY

On Tuesday, February 4, 2025, the FHGC Garden Therapy committee met at Chesterbrook Assisted Living Residence, to present our third, Dual-Month Program, this time covering February and March.

We started with February's Valentine's Day theme. Each participant used Q-tip brushes and watercolor paints to create tiny hearts with a simple connecting left-right blot on a piece of card stock. The volunteers helped to draw green stems from each heart to look like flowers in a bouquet with a red bow drawn around the stems. "Happy Valentine's Day," "I Love You" and other greetings were written on cards by artists and volunteers.

We talked briefly about Love songs and famous singers.

The second project's theme was St. Patrick's Day for March. Sets of green shamrocks, gold shamrocks and pens were passed out, and each resident was instructed to read the large Shamrock saying "I'm Lucky Because....." and write a one-word thought on each of the 5 small shamrocks that set up like little flowers blooming in front of the big tree shamrock. The stickers represent the gold coins in pots found at the end of rainbows, according to the Leprechauns, naturally.

Lastly, frosted cupcakes and napkins were passed out along with a paper cup of fancy Valentine sprinkles. Each person decorated their own cupcake and either ate it on the spot or saved it for later. Each one was also give a fresh bright pink long stem rose, cut to 8 inches, wrapped with a piece of wet paper towel and plastic wrap to preserve flower during our session.



The next two Garden Therapy programs will be Tuesday, April 1st, and Tuesday, June 3rd. We meet at 9:45am in the lobby and take the elevator down one level to the activities room for setup and prep. The program runs from 10:15 to 11:15am with a quick cleanup. Please check our Signup Genius for volunteer slots available.

Thank you to our vivacious Valentine volunteers today: Darla Anderson, Debbie Walker Doody, Gail Gile and Pat Thacker.

Anne Nelson and Lura Marshall

Garden Therapy (cont'd)



All the volunteers and the participants with their festive completed projects.

CIVIC

Thanks to Lisa Rzepka who agreed to take over as Chair of the Civic Committee. As spring approaches, keep an eye out for a Sign Up Genius for volunteers to work in the Five Hills gardens at Glyndon Park. It will be a great way to get to know more of your fellow members, to help maintain a beautiful space for the community to continue to enjoy and to support our new committee Chair.



*"The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size."
Gertrude S. Wister*

CONSERVATION

MICROPLASTICS

. . . extremely small pieces of plastic debris in the environment resulting from the disposal and breakdown of consumer products and industrial waste.

I have been looking into the effects of plastics on our lives and even in our gardens and soil. Microplastics are in our bodies and can cause harm, especially to our lungs, liver, brain, and endocrine system. It seems that even rain can deposit chemicals from plastic on and in our soil. Microplastics have been found in soil enhancements we buy.

The 4 major contributors to plastic pollution are: food and beverages—31.14%; bottle and container caps—15.5%; plastic bags—11.8%; straws and stirrers; beverage bottles and containers—7.27%

Some things to do to reduce exposure to microplastics: avoid single use plastics, buy organic clothes and plastic-free cosmetics, reduce shellfish consumption, use public or alternative transportation, don't microwave food in plastic, regularly dust and vacuum, and filter tap water. Use air purifiers to decrease microplastics in the air.

<https://repurpose.global/blog/post/major-contributors-to-plastic-pollution>

Fresh foods that contain the most microplastic: apples contain over 100,000 microplastics per gram; pears contain an average of 189,550 microplastic particles/gram; carrots contain over 100,000 microplastic particles/gram; lettuce contains the largest pieces of plastic but is the least contaminated vegetable; broccoli contains an average of 50,000 microplastic particles/gram. This study was published in the journal Environmental Science August 2020.

To support liver health which can be damaged by exposure to microplastics, drink lots of water, eat fibrous foods, and avoid processed foods.

There is much more information available on the web such as the link below:
<https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/plastics-and-health/>

Elizabeth Huebner



MEMBERSHIP

Our club will start collecting dues for the year September 2025 to July 2026. Collection is during February and March – **deadline is March 31st**.

Active members - \$70.00

Associate Members - \$75.00

Description of each membership is explained in our Club's yearbook.

Checks can be given to me at meetings or mailed to me at the address below. Please make the checks payable to Five Hills Garden Club.

Valerie Warriner
13479 Lake Shore Dr.
Herndon, VA 20171

This is the time members need to review their information in the current yearbook making sure all information is correct. If correct, please let me know at our meetings or email me at (wwarriner@aol.com) indicating No Changes. If updating is necessary, please complete a Registration form. I can provide a copy of the form at our meetings or you can request a copy of the form electronically. If you have any questions or need help, please feel free to contact me.

Valerie Warriner